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SUPPORTING ACTIVE LEARNING

DIDACTIC GUIDE TO PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

PH ZH ZURICH UNIVERSITY OF TEACHER EDUCATION

This publication was developed within the Swiss projects of the Department for International Projects in Education of the Zurich University of Teacher Education, who coordinated production, design and editing of all materials.

Parts of this newly developed manual have been inspired by teaching materials of international projects of the department IPE of the Zurich University of Teacher Education (JOBS, FACE, CORE, Living Democracy). They can be found under ipe-textbooks.phzh.ch.

The publication was financed by the Lottery Fund of the Canton of Zurich, Switzerland.

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Published in 2020
Zurich University of Teacher Education
International Projects in Education (IPE)

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CONTENT

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Personal development, life skills and job orientation

Personal development
"Personal Development" (PD) is a programme for teachers who teach transversal and life skills to students. It focuses on the teaching of all transversal skills that are needed for the development of physically and mentally healthy students and the development of a solid personal identity. These skills and competencies therefore comprise all life skills that children and adolescents need in different situations school and life situations: in their present and in their future private and professional lives.

What are the life skills in personal development?
Life skills include competencies and skills in different spheres of personality. These include

- Cognitive skills such as problem-solving skills, creative thinking skills, critical thinking skills and meta-cognitive skills
- Social skills such as communication and co-operation skills, interpersonal relationship skills and empathy
- Self-awareness skills such as self-responsibility, decision-making skills and self-reflection skills
- Emotion-regulating skills such as dealing with feelings, dealing with stress and conflict-solving skills

The skills used in this personal development program follow the framework of the World Health Organisation's definition for skills that individuals need for a successful course of their lives (2001). It is important to note that all life skills overlap with each other and can only be supported from a holistic perspective. Cognitive skills can never be trained without focussing on social and self-awareness skills, emotion-regulating skills can never be trained without also taking in account social skills and so forth.

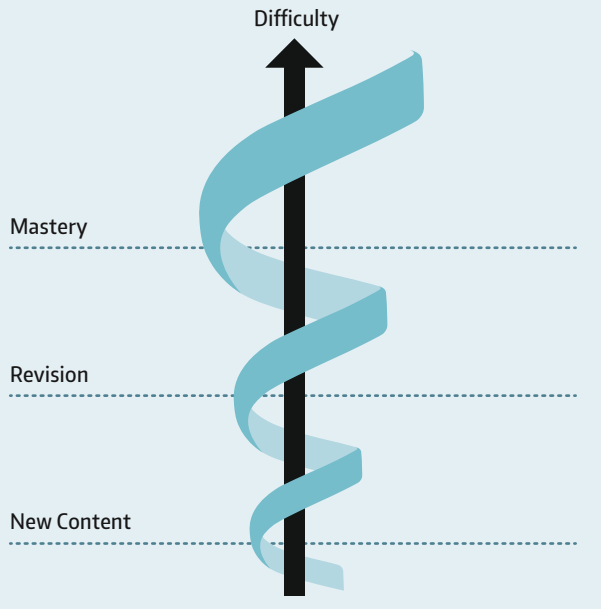
Personal Development skills as an integral part of school and life
Personal development and life skills education is part of all school subjects and are always connected to content that relates to the individual at his or her current state of development. The content and tasks in this personal development program are placed for the different age groups and grades. Throughout the curriculum of compulsory schooling the teaching of life skills becomes more and more complex following similar topics in each grade but focussing on the same skills throughout the entire school time. Life skills education is built up from an early age onwards, already starting at the entry point into the school system at

kindergarten or lower primary school lasting until the end of compulsory education. In the course of the students' school biographies personal development skills are dealt with in the form of a spiral curriculum, being repeated in each grade at a more complex level. (see figure 1)

The spiral curriculum of personal development education or life skills education can be described as an approach that presents different key concepts for learning with increasing degrees of complexity throughout different school years. Following the paradigm of the early educationalist and psychologist Jerome Bruner that "any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development" the spiral curriculum is the underlying pedagogic principle of this personal development program (1960). Information, different topics and tasks are introduced to children at a young age and continually reintroduced, reinforced and built upon throughout their learnings. It is not only the proficiency in the different skills that will be developed in an adaptive way of learning but also the meaning and significance of what is taught that becomes an integral part of the personal development program.

FIGURE 1

SPIRAL CURRICULUM OF THE PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



This connected vision of a spiral curriculum is therefore constructed around ideas, principles and values that are deemed important and provide worth to the students as they mature as well as society as a whole. Personal development in this program thus also follows the approach and paradigm of life-long learning.

Personal development can be regarded as the foundation that is needed for other transversal themes of education, such as education for society, health education, job orientation etc.

TASK:

a. Make a mindmap of the four areas of skills:
- *Cognitive skills*
- *Social skills*
- *Self-awareness skills*
- *Emotional-regulatory skills*

Record which skills could be observed in the model lesson and exchange your insights with a partner and in the plenary.

b. Collect examples from your own teaching experience in the four areas of skills. Give examples for each skill category. Exchange with a partner the opportunities, but also the challenges that you encounter in teaching.

Life Skills

Life skills is a key word used in many programmes and adheres to the following definition introduced by the World Health Organisation: "Life skills are abilities for adaptive behavio[u]r that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life" (World Health Organisation, 2001). The WHO describes 10 core skills:

- Decision-making
- Problem-solving
- Creative thinking
- Critical thinking
- Effective communication
- Interpersonal relationship skills
- Self-awareness/responsibility

- Empathy
- Coping with emotions
- Coping with stress

Life skills can therefore also be defined as the competences that an individual needs for sustaining and enriching his or her life. Materials that support the development of these life skills should therefore relate to these competences and contribute to making pre-existing levels of competence visible, transferring and making use of them for the support of life skills in the school context.

TASK:

a. *Make a mindmap of the ten life skills developed by WHO. Record which skills could be observed in the model lesson and exchange your insights with a partner and in the plenary.*

b. *Collect examples from your own teaching experience in the areas of skills. Give examples for each skill category. Exchange with a partner the opportunities, but also the challenges that you encounter in teaching. Is there something special for the age group you teach?*

Job orientation

It is important for job orientation training to combine the training of subject-related and transversal skills with each other. Transversal skills (or life skills) are also acquired in subject-related learning processes (Lersch 2010, 7). A job orientation programme gives input about different professional fields, the labour market, different ways of earning money as well as context factors about the country etc. and connects this with the analysis of the student's own person and his or her skills. By emphasising task-based learning and co-operative learning settings, transversal skills (such as co-operation skills, critical thinking, communication skills, flexibility or taking responsibility) are trained (Weidinger 2012). To put it differently, adolescents and young adults have to know their competences better and have to work on their self-competences and receive the opportunity to investigate their perspectives (Gollob 2011). Job orientation programmes use the class as a real life space where the students are required to collect different bits of information about professions, talk to other people and present their results to their colleagues. All the while, competences such as presentation skills, research skills etc. are being honed.

The competences that are trained in such programmes can be divided into four different categories:

- Analytical competences
- Job-orientation competences
- Methodical competences
- Transversal competences (life skills) such as communication, cooperation, presentation skills etc.

These competences are strongly related to the three dimensions of performance: attitudes, knowledge and skills. Analytical and job-orientation competences belong to the area of knowledge (and skills, to an extent) and methodical competences belong more to the area of skills. Transversal competences always indicate a connection of attitudes and skills. However, the dimensions cannot be separated clearly from each other.

It is the challenge of job orientation training programmes to make sure that the four competence areas can complement each other in a way that students really can make a decision about their future. The personal reflective analysis of individual strengths and weaknesses but also interests and the connection with the other competence areas is the most difficult part. It is important that the tasks are varied and that students learn how to transfer acquired knowledge and methods, skills and attitudes to new situations. This way they can create their own mental model and learn to perceive the differences between a known and a new task (Baartman et al. 2011).

TASK:

Think about your students. Which ones are the challenges that students at the age of preparing for a future job perspective encounter? Which ones are the skills that from your point of view need additional training? Make a brainstorming and exchange with a partner.

1.2 Developing an understanding of learning

Teaching and learning in multi-cultural and multi-ethnic schools that want to support the life skills and self-competences of students have to be learner centred. Learner-centred education happens when the structure, choice of content and organisation of all teaching is geared to the students' needs. Student-centred teaching means that the focus of attention is on the learner's individuality, i. e. students are perceived as individuals with an independent personality (Helmke, 2012). In student-centred education, students are taken seriously and valued as individuals, regardless of their learning performance or success.

This means that the interests, biography and background, the living conditions (life situation) and the specific needs of learners are taken into account and respected. All this has a positive effect on the selfesteem and motivation of students while at the same time facilitating a good learner-teacher relationship. Students in learner-centred education feel more at ease and feel that they are taken more seriously as people. Of course, this kind of setting implies that students can turn to the teacher not only for subject-related, but also for personal questions and problems. In this context, education means not only schooling but, to a certain extent, also parenting.

Apart from paying attention to the emotional-affective dimension in lesson planning, learner-centred education also takes into consideration the developmental stage of the learner, previous knowledge, initial situation, experience and living conditions.

Children are perceived as active subjects and not as mere objects by the teacher or the educational institution. A key requirement of student-centred education is therefore to encourage children and adolescents in a holistic way to become active on their own behalf. As a result, this educational concept does not place the teacher at the centre of teaching but rather the learners. Learner-centred teaching means planning and structuring a lesson from the learners' point of view, in cooperation with them and geared to their needs (Wiater 2012). Or, as Helmke (2012) puts it: learner-centred education is characterised by a high degree of student participation and activity. As opposed to teacher-centred education, the model practised in most countries of South Eastern Europe, learner-centred education calls for a radically different role of the teacher (see section on the new role of the teacher as learning coach or facilitator).

The constructivist approach: an alternative way to see learning processes

In the context of a child-centred perspective of teaching and learning, an understanding of learning as individual construction is central. This constructivist approach to learning is based on two key assumptions (see Woolfolk 2008):

1. Children and adolescents are active subjects in their own learning processes and construct their own knowledge, based on their everyday experience. They develop their own ideas and models about such things as the change between night and day, wars or about disparities between the rich and the poor.
2. Social interaction is crucial for this process of knowledge construction.

The constructivist approach to learning is based on the assumption that learners need the environment as a stimulus and scaffold for their own development. The main impulse for learning originates from within the learners themselves. According to this view, students are actively and specifically looking for those things in their surroundings that pose a problem *(Why does it get dark at night? or Why did so many people from my country migrate?)* in order to increase their knowledge by solving the problem. Learning is seen as a constant rearranging of knowledge. The existing structure built up by the children and adolescents themselves is extended with every new learning process and either reorganised or built from scratch.

Constructivist methodology favours constructing and applying knowledge and competences as opposed to memorising, recalling and reproducing facts, concepts and skills (Woolfolk 2008). The learning goals at the centre of constructivist methodology are problem-solving skills, critical thinking, asking questions, self-determination and openness for different solutions. From a constructivist point of view the recommendations for education are the following:

- Learning should be based on complex, realistic and relevant learning settings and issues; these in turn trigger the learners' knowledge construction and facilitate "discovery learning".
- Learners should be encouraged to adopt and discuss different perspectives and points

of view. In order to be able to do this they should be offered different approaches to the same topic. Students should also get the opportunity to discuss fairly and to exchange ideas.
- Learners should be aware that they are responsible for their own learning and the quality of their learning outcome (this means simultaneously strengthening self-awareness and understanding that learning is the outcome of the constructivist process).

The significance of knowledge transfer and rote learning, which characterises traditional teaching, is thus reduced. This also requires teachers of multi-cultural and multi-ethnic classes to rethink how they plan learning tasks. Instead of: *Learn the following names of plants and animals by heart*, the task may have to be reformulated as follows: *In groups of three, discuss which plants and animals play an important role in the different levels of the forest, take notes and create a small poster about it*.

Another important element of the constructivist approach emphasises the dimension of independent and autonomous learning. In this context, the key term is "self-directed learning". This means that learners regulate (direct) and monitor their own learning process and progress (including e.g. homework and longer-term projects such as a presentation) on their own (independently/autonomously). In this sense, independent learning means that students are responsible for their own learning and can decide autonomously about different aspects thereof.

These decisions are related in particular to the following dimensions:

LEARNING GOALS:

What do I need/do I want to be able to do?

LEARNING CONTENT:

What do I need/do I want to know?

LEARNING METHODS:

How do I learn this, which methods and strategies do I apply?

LEARNING MEDIA:

What kind of tools do I need?

TIME FRAME:

How much time do I need/do I have at my disposal?

PACE OF WORK:

How quickly do I work?

LEARNING PARTNER:

Do I work alone? Do I work with someone else? Do I work in a group?

Whereas the learning objectives and the lesson contents (in everyday reality) at school are usually fixed, the students have some choice with regards to time, pace, learning partner(s) and sometimes also the learning methods they want to use. The Personal development learning programme uses different levels of self-directed learning in order to guide teachers in their decisions about which dimension of learning to introduce first and in order assuage any fears of chaos that teachers often associate with a fully "open" lesson. The learning strategies mentioned above are very important in this respect. They constitute the foundation that students need in order to plan, organise and regulate their learning autonomously. Students in "PD" are active and get progressively more responsible for their own learning during the course of the programme.

2 METHODS: HOW DO I ORGANISE ACTIVE LEARNING?

Page

2.1 Task-based learning

In Personal Development programmes students learn via task-based learning methods (TBL). Task-based means that the students work on the task: it is not the teacher who works on them. This means that the booklets are designed in such a way that students are able to solve problems that lead to useful and meaningful outcomes. In the process of solving these tasks they will explore many pathways leading to a solution. In this way students will acquire necessary competences and skills. Therefore, working on a task itself already means that the students learn something and it is your task as the teacher to make this possible! Try to give students the freedom to try out different ways of solving a problem: TBL will then become quite simple! Also bear in mind the following hint: Five minutes is the limit for giving instructions.

The principle of the teaching and learning programme is based on focussing on the students and their activity during the lessons. In order to leave enough space for TBL it is necessary for the teacher to be aware of his/her speaking time. The teacher should not exceed the limit of 5 minutes when giving instructions to students.

TBL focuses on asking students to engage in meaningful tasks that develop the competence the teacher wishes them to acquire. Such tasks can include visiting a site, professionals etc., conducting an interview, or calling customer service for assistance. Assessment is primarily based on the task outcome (in other words the appropriate completion of tasks) rather than on the accuracy of language forms. The basic approach of integrating thinking and doing has implications for the whole process of learning. Dealing with learning objectives actively is only not confined to the preliminary stages of “real” learning, which is often understood to involve only the minds of learners. Rather, integrating learning and doing gives all learners a clear idea of why they are learning by doing: they have a task to do and this requires the activation of many abilities and skills. In this kind of teaching, the learner must define his or her learning needs with each new situation that arises. Learners also require instruction from the teacher and this means that students set their teachers tasks and not vice versa. TBL produces ideal combinations of constructivist learning and learning by instruction.

According to Rod Ellis (2003) a task has four main characteristics:

1. A task involves a primary focus on (pragmatic) meaning.
2. A task has some kind of ‘gap’.

3. The participants choose the resources needed to complete the task.
4. A task has a clearly defined outcome.

In task-based learning, students face problems that they wish to solve. Learning is not an end in itself, but leads to something useful and meaningful. Students learn by exploring ways to solve a problem, setting themselves and their teacher the tasks that pave the way to the solution of the problem. Many real-life situations consist of finding solutions to problems. TBL prepares students for life by creating real life situations as a setting for learning.

Task-based learning follows a pattern that can be described in the following general terms. If the teacher sticks to this pattern, the potential of learning by doing (i. e. active learning) will unfold almost automatically:

- The students face a task that needs to be solved (presented either by the teacher or a textbook).
- The students plan how they will actively tackle the task.
- The students implement their action plan.
- The students reflect on their process of learning and present their results.

It is important for students to experience the principles of TBL frequently in different contexts. A good task that gives rise to many problems that need to be solved is the best means to create a productive and exciting learning environment.

Even though there is an increased interest in TBL worldwide, there are issues to be considered in planning its implementation. These include the risk that students will stay within the safe constraints of familiar terms and forms, just "getting by", so as to avoid the extra effort and the fear of failure that accompanies the risk of trying out new possibilities. As with all group work and group tasks, some students may also rely on others to do most of the work and learning, rather than share the effort equally.

Another challenge is that if the learning is not well planned, there is a constant pressure of running out of time. A third challenge is the difficulty of implementing task-based approaches where classes are large and space limited and/or inflexible (such as immovable rows of desks).

TASK:

Look through the Personal Development teaching and learning materials and find three examples of task-based teaching and learning sequences. Discuss them with a colleague.

2.2 Co-operative learning

The "PD" teaching and learning materials support and encourage the concept of cooperative learning. Cooperative learning focuses on developing openness when working together, on communication and on discussion. When working together, task content can be understood in more depth and students can develop greater self-confidence. When working in groups, students can experience what it's like to be accepted by others and valued as team members and can share their knowledge more freely. Cooperation can be encouraged by group games, group activities and group discussions. Teachers should take care to offer individual work periods and group work periods in a balanced ratio.

Cooperative learning sees learning as something that takes place on an individual level, but that always requires social exchange (Hild 2011). It is of great importance for a student to have his or her actions recognised and for them to have some form of social relevance. Learning always has to do with the self-concept of a student. If learning only happens without any echo from the outside the danger might arise that self-esteem diminishes or that self-efficacy decreases. Self-efficacy means knowing that you have the ability to learn something or to fulfil some kind of task (Bandura 1997). Engaging in an exchange with others converts individual learning processes into social learning processes. By thinking about oneself and by seeing, listening and discussing the opinions and abilities of others, students also learn. Cooperative learning methods engage with both levels: the

individual level and the group level. The goals of cooperative learning methods can be summarised as follows (see also Konrad & Traub 2001, Green & Green 2007 etc.):

- Improving your own achievement
- Analysing your strengths, characteristics and interests
- Developing social competences and team skills (working with partners, group work, discussing)
- Changing one's attitude (towards oneself and towards others)

On a group level the goals refer to achieving a good group product and to discovering, discussing and using synergies for creating a surprising and original group product.

Think-Pair-Share

The Think-Pair-Share method is the basic form of cooperative learning (Brüning & Saum 2009). In Think-Pair-Share the number of learners increases with every step. The original task is given to each student and is worked through individually at first (Think). After that, every student looks for a partner and exchanges the results or enriches the results through discussion (Pair). In the Share phase both partners join with another pair, forming a group of 4 to present their results (Share). This phase can also take place in the plenary.

Pair-Work

This is part of Think-Pair-Share. First, students work on a certain task by themselves (e. g. problem-solving). They take notes. After that they work together with a partner on the same task and exchange their ideas.

Hints for teachers

- Be clear when advising the students!
- Offer well-structured material or images etc.
- Change your pace of teaching (individual, co-operative, group etc.)
- Set clear rules for cooperation (no blaming, respecting other opinions etc.)
- Change the groups' composition from time to time.

TASK:

Are there activities in your teaching that are cooperative? Which ones? Briefly brainstorm and write down some examples. Exchange your thoughts with a partner. What do you have in common? What are the differences?

2.3 Project-based learning

While task-based learning and cooperative learning trigger students' activity to some extent, project-based learning can be described as the purest form of active learning for students. In project-based learning traditional forms of teaching and learning are substituted by an alternative approach which brings the contents and the competences of the students right into the centre. The stimulus for a project can be a question raised by the students (or the teacher), an input from everyday life, a problem that the students want to solve or a content that is relevant to the students' lives.

According to the European Schoolnet (Harper 2014) project-based learning can be regarded as *"the learners' responses to real-world problems in terms of a longer term, as a cumulative activity that may take place individually or in groups, and usually requires a final practical outcome"* (Cook and Weaving, 2013). Project-based learning can also be seen as *"a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to a complex question, problem, or challenge"* (Buck Institute for Education, 2014).

Key characteristics of projects in schools include the following (*ibid*):

- Key Knowledge, Understanding, and Success Skills – The project is focused on student learning goals, including standards-based content and skills such as critical thinking/ problem solving, communication, collaboration, and self-management.

- Challenging Problem or Question – The project is framed by a meaningful problem to solve or a question to answer, at the appropriate level of challenge.
- Sustained Inquiry – Students engage in a rigorous, extended process of asking questions, finding resources, and applying information.
- Authenticity – The project features real-world context, tasks and tools, quality standards, or impact – or speaks to students' personal concerns, interests, and issues in their lives.
- Student Voice & Choice – Students make some decisions about the project, including how they work and what they create.
- Reflection – Students and teachers reflect on learning, the effectiveness of their inquiry and project activities, the quality of student work, obstacles and how to overcome them.
- Critique & Revision – Students give, receive, and use feedback to improve their process and products.
- Public Product – Students make their project work public by explaining, displaying and/or presenting it to people beyond the classroom.

Projects are cross curricular, meaning they involve content from different subjects and curriculum goals from different subjects and are not solely based within a specific subject. Furthermore, project-based learning addresses not only contents and key competences in these subjects but teaches transversal skills at the same time.

Project-based learning typically takes place in phases. During these phases the teacher acts as a coach and guides the students to use a variety of resources, to find strategies that are motivating and to discover the project's topic in depth. For the teacher, this means shifting their role from lecturer to coach and taking a step back. In the beginning this might be unusual or difficult for some teachers, as it means trusting the students to work independently while at the same time bearing a certain level of movement, discussion or noise within the classroom. However, project-based learning does not mean chaos and hardly ever ends up in chaos. Project-based learning always takes place in pairs or groups and this cooperation triggers learning processes and lets student co-construct their knowledge surrounding a particular question (see also cooperative learning). The common phases of project-based learning (Stix & Hrbek 2006) are presented under figure 2.

It might be necessary to set checkpoints during the various project phases whereby students inform each other about the status of the project, clarify organisational details, take a timeout or catch up on work. The following list includes events that call for a checkpoint (Frey 2010):

- Mutual information exchange: *I am not really sure what the others are doing.*
- Planning next steps: *I would like to know what to do next.*
- Reporting results: *I have produced something that the others should know about.*
- Coordination: *If we do not coordinate our efforts now, everything will be in chaos.*
- Documenting: *So much has already happened: we should take notes.*
- Orientation: *I have lost the overview. There is so much going on.*
- Securing results: *We have developed so much in the meantime. We should put it together.*
- Change of pace: *I can't continue any longer if we keep going on at this speed.*
- Time management: *This has taken so much longer than we expected.*
- Reframing goals: *Does this still fit our goal?*

We also recommend looking into already existing projects and getting ideas and inspiration from them. This can be done on the European Schoolnet database (http://keyconet.eun.org/) or on the Buck Institute for Education's project database (http://bie.org/project_search).

TASK:

Look through the topics in your "PD" booklets. Try to extract three possible topics that you could imagine doing project based learning with your class. Talk to a colleague and get his or her opinion. How would you plan this project? Discuss the project phases.

FIGURE 2

THE PROJECT-BASED LEARNING PROCESS

1. The teacher-coach **sets the stage for students with real-life samples** of the projects they will be doing.
2. Students **take on the role of project designers** possibly establishing a forum for display.
3. Students **discuss and accumulate the background information** needed for their designs.
4. The teacher-coach and students **negotiate the criteria for evaluating the projects.**
5. Students **accumulate the materials** necessary for the project.
6. Students **create their projects.**
7. Students **prepare to present their projects.**
8. Students **present their projects.**
9. Students **reflect on the process and evaluate the projects** based on the criteria established in Step 4.

2.4 Experiential learning

Experiential learning is a method of educating through first-hand experience. Skills, knowledge, and experience are acquired outside of the traditional academic classroom setting and may include internships, studies abroad, field trips, field research, and service-learning projects.

The concept of experiential learning was first explored by John Dewey and Jean Piaget, among others. It was made popular by education theorist David A. Kolb, who, along with John Fry, developed the experiential learning theory, which is based on the idea that learning is a process whereby knowledge is created through transformation of experience. It is based on four main elements which operate in a continuous cycle during the learning experience. (see figure 3)

The components of experiential learning assignments vary to some degree, but generally follow the following criteria:

- The project should be personally meaningful and have some significance to the student

FIGURE 3

ELEMENTS OF EXPERIMENTAL LEARNING

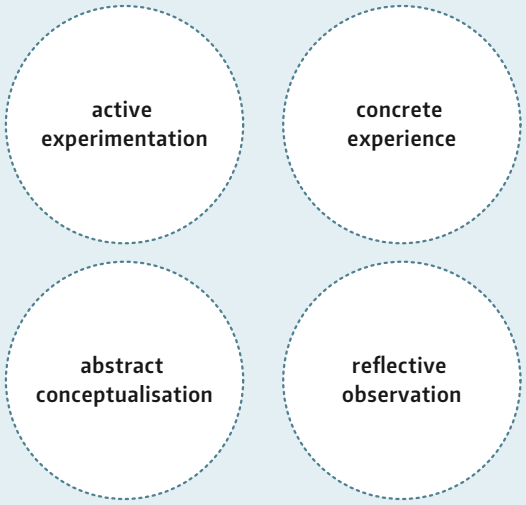
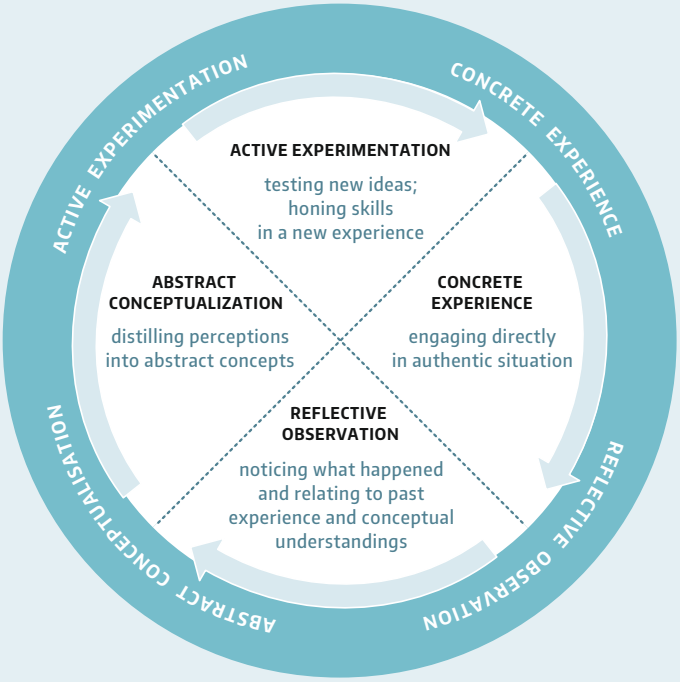


FIGURE 4

KOLB'S CYCLE OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING



- Students should have opportunities to reflect on and discuss their learning experience throughout the process of the assignment
- The experience should involve the student's whole person, including the senses, personality, and emotions
- Previous knowledge on the subject matter should be acknowledged

When students are given opportunities to learn in authentic situations, learning becomes significantly more powerful. By engaging in formal, guided, authentic, real-world experiences, individuals…

- deepen their knowledge through repeatedly acting and then reflecting on this action,
- develop skills through practice and reflection,
- support the construction of new understandings when placed in novel situations, and
- extend their learning as they bring their learning back to the classroom.

How does experiential learning work?

Kolb's (1984) cycle of learning depicts the experiential learning process (see figure 4). This process includes the integration of:

- knowledge – the concepts, facts, and information acquired through formal learning and past experience;
- activity – the application of knowledge to a "real world" setting; and
- reflection – the analysis and synthesis of knowledge and activity to create new knowledge (Indiana University, 2006, n. p.).

TASK:

Look through the teaching and learning materials. Find three examples that trigger experiential learning. Exchange them with a colleague, or choose one topic from the teaching and learning materials. Try to design your own teaching sequence using an experiential learning setting.

2.5 Using games

Children and adolescents love to play games. Playing games is an important element for their development even before they enter school. Through play, children and adolescents practice important skills that they will need in for school and work as well as for their entire personality development. Games can be also used in the classroom in order to support cooperation and social competences, creative thinking, critical thinking or in order to train specific skills in a certain learning area. Games in a school context can also be used to trigger a change consciously and in order to experience certain things with one's senses (movement, hearing, seeing, touching etc.). Games do not have to fulfil any particular function, but can be purely for fun.

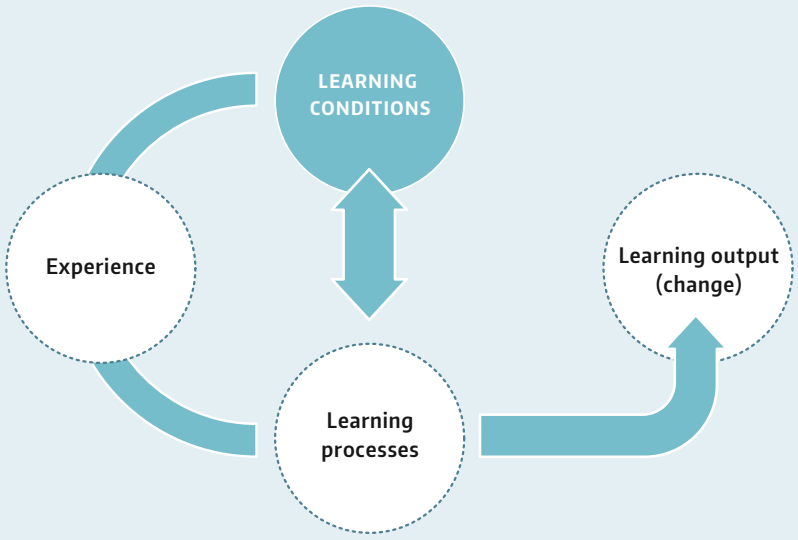
It is important to perceive playing games not just as a break time activity but as an integral part of one's own teaching practice. It is not very helpful to differentiate between playing and learning (Petillon 2001). It is better to view learning as something more general. Hannes Petillon puts it likes this: "Learning can be described as the long-lasting change of behaviour through experience. Experience has got an active and a passive side: If you make experiences you are confronted with situations (learning conditions) and can handle these situations through actively exploring, interpreting and evaluating (learning processes). Long-lasting changes can occur which influence the entire personality of the learner (learning output)" (*ibid*).

The three components conditions, process and output are relevant for all learning situations, no matter whether in the class or in a game. The following diagram illustrates this (*ibid*). (see figure 5)

Learning processes result out of a certain experience under certain conditions. These learning conditions can be either a traditional class delivered by a teacher or a free play situation. Through the engagement in this situation (either through play or instruction) and through the learning processes a learning output or a change in behaviour is developed. Learning therefore also happens through play (Einsiedler 1999).

FIGURE 5

COMPONENTS OF LEARNING



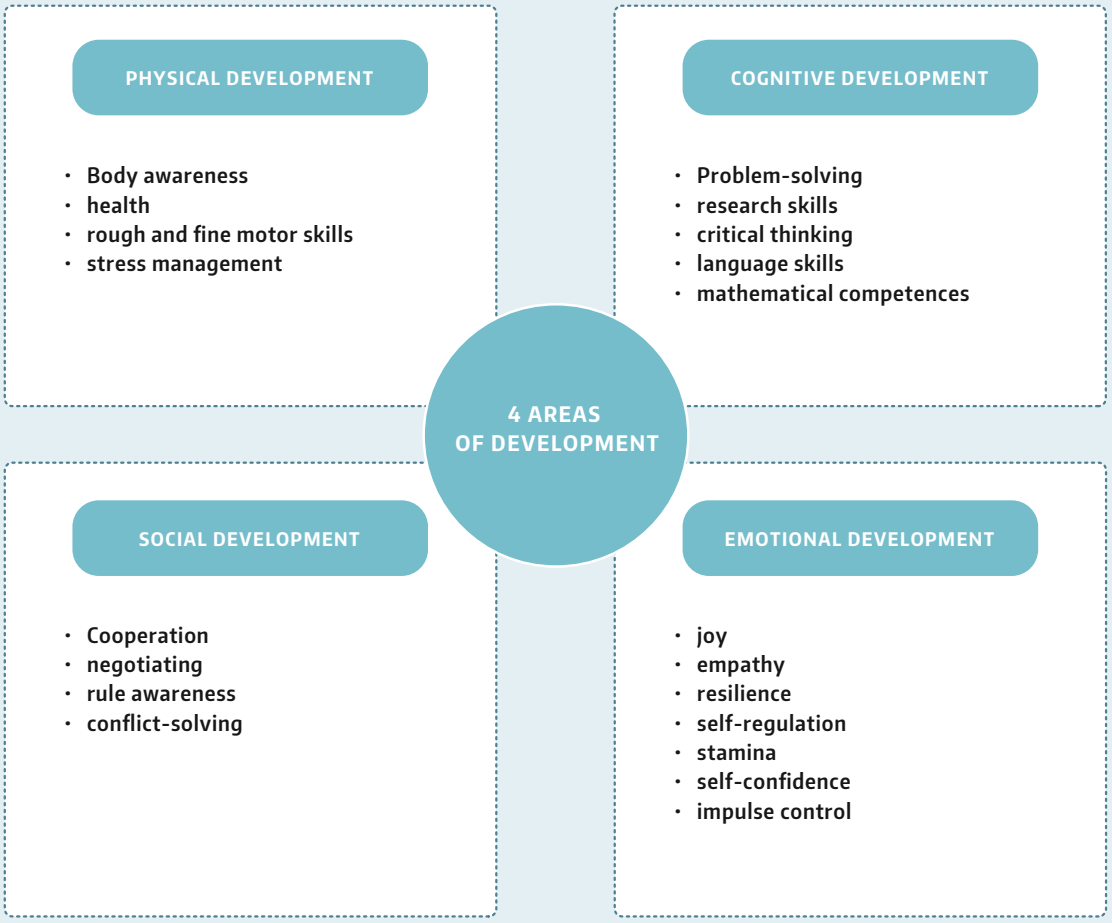
Playing as an opportunity for development

Teachers can play games inside the classroom or outside the classroom. Games activate the students in any case and support learning. This is the case especially if the students can choose the games they want to play. Learning which is self-induced and self-directed can go deeper and last longer. Playing games can be an important part of school and class teaching. Playing games during a lesson supports social and emotional areas of personality development as well as cognitive ones. Studies on the influence of games in a school context show that games contribute to a positive attitude, increase motivation, change attitudes towards learning and improve problem-solving skills (Museum of Play 2016). Games in school can contribute to four important areas of development. (see figure 6)

Games support physical, cognitive, social or emotional development according to their type and function. Some games purposely focus on a specific area of competence (e. g. cooperation, mathematical competences). A lot of games support more than one area of development simultaneously. Especially in the area of emotional development, games can positively influence empathy, a change of perspective, stamina, impulse control, self-confidence or resilience (psychological resistance to deal with failures, crises or criticism).

FIGURE 6

DEVELOPMENTAL AREAS SUPPORTED THROUGH PLAY



The function of games
Games can be played in class for various reasons. This checklist lists the different possible functions of games:

- *Self-function:* Playing games for the sake of playing games. This helps to generate a pleasant atmosphere.
- *Catalyst:* Playing games to assist with the transition from one situation to another (e. g. from kindergarten to school or from leisure time to lesson time).
- *Accompanying learning areas:* Playing games can help convey content (e. g. open learning). Learning games can lay the necessary foundations for accessing a particular content, training particular skills or exploring new aspects of a problem.
- *Accompanying education areas:* Interactive games or scenic games can support educational processes (e. g. health awareness and education, social behaviour, awareness of rules).
- *Diagnosis and support:* Teachers can easily observe while students play games. During games, students can also be supported individually, so games can help to promote differentiation.
- *Relaxation:* Games can be used to make a change from very cognitively oriented lessons by providing times of relaxation and movement.

TASK:

Remember the games you liked to play as a child. What were they and why?

Remember the games your students like to play. Why? Discuss both questions with one colleague.

Compile a collection of games you could use during your teaching.

2.6 Using media

Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, smartphones, selfies, superstars, fake news, photo manipulation, cyber bullying, robots, home videos, photography projects … Media have become more and more important in society in general and in young people's lives especially. Both media consumption and media production are very important for learning, leisure and identity construction.

Media literacy – the ability to use, interpret and produce media in a positive and productive and socially acceptable way – has become a key competence in modern life – especially when looking at professional contexts but also in private environments.

Media literacy
Media educator Baacke described four dimensions of media literacy (Dieter Baacke 1999):

1. *Media critique:* developing a critical attitude towards media products, media developments and institutions. It can also mean being self-critical and reflecting the own patterns of using media. Reflection on potential benefits and risks is also an important aspect.

2. *Media knowledge:* knowing basic facts about media like types of media, media formats/genres, criteria for telling the difference between fact and fiction, media institutions, journalism, economic and political implications on processes of production and distribution, media effects and media reception.

3. *Using media:* being able to use media to fulfil personal and social needs (information, entertainment, communication, distinction, identification with a social group, social acceptance etc.), to communicate effectively, knowing how to get access to media contents, how to operate media gadgets and how to search and select.

4. *Making media:* being able to become a producer and innovator of media.

Important dimensions for young people

Young people can learn that media are not only a potential danger (e. g. cyber-bulling, sexting, dangerous chat partners, difficult role models and beauty ideals on the media, problematic forms of (addictive) Internet use) but also a tool for professional contexts and a strong creative tool for self-expression and the development of life skills. Media literacy skills will become more and more important for future jobs. In a time where more and more human activities are replaced by robots, skills like creativity, empathy and social communication are key. Working with media means a lot of learning opportunities in this context.

The following dimensions are important – especially for children and young people:

- Using media as a tool for orientation and searching (using Internet search engines effectively, being able to evaluate the results of a search in context of relevance and trustworthiness, knowing job portals and job counselling sites)
- Using media as a tool for an effective presentation or self presentation (supporting a talk with images, films and words using a tool like PowerPoint)
- Using media as a tool for feedback (a filmed presentation allows a lot of self-reflection on non-verbal communication and performance skills).
- Knowing which form of media use can open up possibilities and enhance life quality and knowing which forms hinder personal development and produce feelings of tension and stress. Two questions are important: *What do people do with media?* and *What do media do to people?* or on a more personal level: *What do I do with media?* and *What do media do to me?* A lot of employers have started to make online checks to make sure the digital self-representation of a person looking for a job is not problematic. Posting pictures on social media that show young people with alcohol, drugs or weapons can be an obstacle for employment. The same is true for sexually explicit self-representations.
- Knowing how to use media for organising learning processes and for creating and optimising a personal learning environment (e. g. *Which programmes and apps do I use for learning and communication, which ones for taking notes, making excerpts, which for documentation and creating archives for texts, images or videos?*)
- Creative media production.

Creative production with media

Using media as a means of creative self-expression means a lot of possibilities for learning and development. In the context of creative media projects both the production process and the product are important. During production learning processes based on both thematic and social dimensions take place. In the context of media production in groups the British media educator David Buckingham spoke about a “mini-democracy”, whereby young people can learn the basics of democratic negotiation.

The final media product can be a source of pride and recognition for the makers. Media projects can help to discover and to communicate new aspects and new strengths about the own person. In this context media production can help to enhance self-esteem and to develop on a personal level.

Integrating media into teaching and learning processes can be a very strong source of motivation both for teachers and pupils. Using media in a creative way helps to gain new perspectives on the self and on the world. Media projects can focus directly on life skills, others can promote the development of self-efficacy as a result of making a media product.

TASK:

Look through the teaching and learning materials. Choose three tasks where you think media could be used. Indicate how you would use different kinds of media and describe the goals you want to achieve through this. Exchange your ideas with a colleague.

3 THE TEACHER'S ROLE: HOW DO I ACCOMPANY LEARNING PROCESSES?

Page

3.1 Guidance and assessment

Internal and external assessments enable a person to get a picture of his or her own state of learning and to develop further steps along the way. Both kinds of assessment also help to set new goals. People are generally used to being assessed externally by others, which means receiving feedback from students, teachers or parents.

Self-assessment describes the ability to estimate oneself realistically and to draw consequences from this. It is an essential instrument for supporting learners in the development of autonomy and for guiding them away from dependence solely on teachers' feedback. Students who are able to estimate themselves realistically develop a better picture of their own self and will be less likely to feel insecure. They will be less dependent on external feedback and praise and can interpret reactions of teachers more adequately.

Self-assessment and assessment by others do not have to be completely congruent but should be heard in joint meetings, thought over and discussed. A student does not automatically see herself or himself in the same way the teacher does. Different viewpoints have to be laid out and discussed. In this way blind spots, narrow perspectives or fixed pictures can be corrected. Step-by-step, students can learn how to estimate their own competences and abilities, how to give feedback to other students and how to accept feedback and discuss it. Through this step-by-step approach, self-assessment and assessment by others become more congruent. For further information see Helmke (2012) or Schmid (2011).

Forms of assessment

In general there are three different forms of assessment:

- *Formative assessment: assessment of learning processes*
  This perspective serves to improve, control and check a student's learning process or the students' and teacher's activities to achieve a certain objective (e. g. observations, continuous feedback, qualitative feedback on a piece of work).

- *Summative assessment: assessment of learning achievements*
  At a certain point in time, a conclusive assessment sums up the knowledge and skills that a student has acquired. Its main purpose is to inform, for example, the student or parents about the student's level of performance (e. g. tests).

- *Prognostic assessment*
  This type of assessment looks at a student's future development. At different stages during a student's school career, people involved in a student's education process (students, teachers, parents, in some cases school psychologists and authorities) recommend how a student should continue his or her school career.

Choosing the norms of assessment

Assessment in school is a wide-open field. Not only does it influence explicit things that can be observed such as students' qualifications or their position in society (depending on their grades) and thus their academic career, assessment in school also influences other aspects within the individual such as self-image, self-esteem and the general concept one has about his or her own competences and abilities. School has an enormous influence on the self-perception of competences. Its direct influence depends on the way assessment is chosen and carried out in school.

- *Social criterion*
  Because of the social context in which learning in school takes place, using the social criterion as a measure can give essential information about competences in comparison to other students. At the same time, estimates about competences in a comparative social perspective strongly influence the self-image and self-concept of students.

- *Individual criterion*
  Using the individual criterion for assessment means comparing intra-individual differences with each other. What is the difference between the student's achievement in "PD" last month and now? It is a temporary comparison that is used here. Young students especially tend to prefer this criterion as a tool for assessment. The amount of "added value" is being recorded over a certain amount of time. This makes it possible to give feedback to the student about the range of his or her achievement as well as the way in which it has increased or decreased. Achievement is not compared to the achievement of other students. Rather, the progress of each student is in focus. This method of assessment also corresponds with the informal learning processes that take place out of school where the student evaluates his or her own competences autonomously.

- *Objective criterion*
  Academic achievement is assessed against a particular learning objective, whereas an individually achieved learning progress is assessed against a realistically achievable goal. This method of assessment is an objective-based norm and informs about the approach towards a goal that is defined as the "perfect" achievement. Comparing the student's achievement with other students' learning progress is not of importance. Criteria-based tests are oriented towards clearly defined goals. They measure achievement with reference to a certain characteristic which the teacher selects. This also means that the teacher has to set and present the goals the students are required to attain. Thus a student's individual achievements are not compared to those of other students. According to various studies in this field, social processes of comparison between students only occur when there is no objective criterion used in assessment.

What are the results of this discussion? If a teacher wants to strengthen the self-concept of his or her students as well as their own awareness for taking up responsibility, assessment should happen following an objective criterion. Goals given by the teacher have to be clear and have to be communicated to the students.

TASK:

Choose one piece of work your students have produced recently that you have graded. Following the information in the above text, which form of assessment did you apply and which norm of reference did you use? Do this for other products from your students as well. Exchange your insights with a colleague and talk about the challenges you faced.

3.2 Coaching your students

The students you work with are usually capable of working on their own and – depending on their age – can understand written instructions and work together with colleagues. Nevertheless, your task as the teacher will be to provide individual support to those who need it. In the course of a school year your role will increasingly develop into that of a coach and you will spend less and less time "lecturing". You can either take on the role of a coach by walking around and answering individual questions or you can assign this role to a student who has already fulfilled the task. Make sure you do not always choose the same students as the role models. They may become stigmatised and less popular with their classmates if they are always assigned that role.

Giving direct feedback

Results of various research studies about factors that influence student achievement show that the most important factor is personal and direct feedback given by the teacher. During students' learning time, make sure that you reserve enough time for giving feedback to your students – not only in written form but also during lessons. When you have switched from the role of lecturer to facilitator this will happen automatically. You will get to know your students' work and performance a lot better than you used to. You will follow their individual progress much more closely and you will be able to comment on their individual work on a much deeper level. You will also have to deal with a lot of different products in terms of quality.

The idea of sharing

Switching from the role of lecturer to facilitator does not mean that as a teacher, you will lose your role of presenting contents and facts. However, your role as a moderator will become more important and this includes steering the desired learning processes in the students. This accounts especially for situations where a discussion or a debate about something has to take place. In the booklets, this is described as a "discussion" or as "sharing". "Sharing" means to take an interest in others, to know what they have achieved, how they did it, what they think, what their reasons are, as well as explaining oneself, one's actions and reasoning, one's opinions and experiences.

Criteria for chairing a discussion, or sharing

- The students speak more than you do.
- The students also ask questions, not only you.
- When you ask a question or give a prompt, more than one or two students answer.
- The students start questions and answers among themselves at least once.
- The sharing stays focussed: you (or a student) compare, summarise, bring the sharing back to the point etc.
- Personal and lively: you (or a student) ask for the opposite, for a personal opinion from several students, for a concrete example, what they would do outside school etc.
- Take and give enough time, so that only three or four themes are covered within a 15-minute sequence.

Writing feedback

Remember to react primarily to a few points you are interested in: what the student did well, where she or he surprised you, what the main point was in your eyes. Then you can add one question where you want to hear more, or one concrete tip about how the student could act differently next time.

TASK:

Think about the way feedback is given in school and about how you give feedback to your students. Think about what it means to change the role of the teacher. What would be different for you? Discuss both questions with a colleague and formulate three questions to ask in the plenary.

3.3 Reflecting on your role as a teacher

The significance of classroom management

Effective classroom management is one of the prerequisites for good quality teaching. Classroom management is the temporal and motivational framework for teaching in class; it helps to avoid unnecessary disturbances and chaos. International studies have shown that there is a proven direct link between classroom management and the extent of the students' learning progress. In this sense, Hattie's (2013) comprehensive meta-analysis equally indicates, that well-organised classes and teachers who are strongly committed to classroom management, have a clear (medium to high) effect on the learning performance of their students. Another important related aspect is the personal attitude of teachers (motivation, commitment) and the extent to which they are able to recognise and react to students' problematic behaviour. The following points are crucial with respect to classroom management in multi-cultural and multi-ethnic classes (see Woolfolk 2008):

- The classroom must be well organised (material, seating arrangement, organisational aspects etc.).
- All students must be highly and constantly involved in activities and exercises that are attractive and task based; the teacher must be able to recognise and modify activities accordingly.
- Define, ideally together with the students, clear, plausible rules and behaviours and make them accessible (e. g. put up a poster with class or talking rules).
- Define the consequences of inappropriate behaviour; deal with discipline problems without making a fuss and without interrupting the lesson.
- A teacher can radiate uncertainty and indecisiveness.
- Make sure the lessons flow smoothly and avoid incongruous and unnecessary breaks.

New roles of the teacher: learning coach and learning facilitator

For students, competence-oriented and needs-oriented teaching means being highly active. In order for this to happen, the teacher must plan suitable learning activities, supervise the students along the way and give them active support if needed. Increasingly, teachers take on the role of "learning coaches", i. e. of initiator, supporter or evaluator of learning processes; they exert their role as a traditional lecturer less and less.

These new teaching materials stress this shift in the teacher's role. To be able to fulfil this new role, the teacher must be able to assess the learning needs and the prerequisites of each student. Other tasks entail planning challenging lessons with regard to content and methodology, developing learning paths, choosing exercises, observing and supervising the learning process and, if problems arise, intervening in an adequate way. During and at the end of a learning sequence it is also necessary to analyse the learning success (who has learnt what; what goals or competences must be further emphasised or looked at in more depth and whether an assessment or assignment of grades is necessary). Another important aspect is the ability to gain insight through conversations with students, to reflect upon their learning and record the results.

There are various possibilities nowadays, such as keeping a learning journal or compiling a portfolio, in which some representative products of the students' work are collected. Within this learning programme the teaching and learning materials are compiled in a kind of portfolio and constitute a yearlong learning journal for students. This also means that the relationship and cooperation between teachers and students is different, i. e. much more equal and intense than in a more traditional form of education where the teachers mainly lecture and their authority is based on their official position.

TASK:

Analyse your own role as a teacher and the roles of the students in your class. Write down which roles you occupy as a teacher and which roles the students occupy. Discuss your results with a colleague or within your group.

3.4 Managing different situations

Creating an atmosphere of trust and respect
Various tasks in the Personal Development programme are closely related to the students' individual person. Exposing oneself can be a delicate thing to do. Make sure you do not force the students into any actions that you yourself would not do. In order to reinforce this, "PD" suggests using your position as the teacher to model different tasks every now and again (e. g. how to make a mind map, modelling an interview etc.). It is important to create an atmosphere that makes this possible. Most of the tasks involve working with partners. Students will need an atmosphere characterised by trust and respect in order to speak freely about their personal issues. It is your task as the teacher to create and promote this atmosphere by avoiding competitive structures among the students and facilitating co-operative behaviour. The following hints are taken from Shelley (2013):

Respect is a two-way street
A large part of classroom management starts with respect and that is a two-way street. Management of disrespectful students is difficult enough, let alone with a language barrier, but if you handle yourself calmly and with authority you will be on the right road without having to resort to anger or harshness.

Be consistent
Enforcing the rules from the very first day of class and never varying from the established set of rules is the first way to earn respect from your students. If you keep the rules to the letter, students will always know what to expect. If the rules are the same every day (and for every student) there are no unexpected consequences for anyone. While your students might gripe about the rules, students really do need a set of standards to go by, so they know what is and isn't allowed. Secretly, they want to be told what to do! Students need boundaries to feel secure and to be able to focus on their work. Students do not respect a teacher who is not consistent. Therefore be consistent in your rules and your attitude. Above all, never play favourites. Good classroom management means the rules need to be in place for everyone, from the student with the best skills to the worst. If you play favourites, your students will know and they will think less of you for it. You also can't slack off if you are having a bad day – this lets your students down completely, because they will never know how far they can bend your rules – which only encourages them to try.

Treat your students the way you want to be treated. This means that no matter what, you never embarrass your students or talk down to them. If you treat them this way they will not trust you and without trust you will have a hard time earning their respect. They need to know that you are in control of yourself and your emotions. If you, as an adult, cannot control your temper, why should they? Children really do learn by example; so part of your job is to be their living example.

If you care, they will
Get to know your students. In informal conversation, ask them questions about themselves. Do they participate in a sport? Play an instrument? Do they have a special talent? If you can get across to your students that you care about them, you'll more than likely earn their respect. Students sometimes see teachers as robots. They can't believe they have real lives and interests and that they actually care. By asking each student questions and having conversations with them about life outside of the classroom, you'll be letting them see that you are, after all, human – and one who takes a genuine interest and cares for them.

Give them hope
Praise and encouragement where it's due can go a long way. If you constantly tell someone what they are doing wrong, they might just give up. In order to flourish as a person, a pat on the back can make all the difference. Praise good behaviour and good work, too. If you have a negative attitude in the "PD" classroom your students will too. But if you can always find the positive things, even within a negative situation, your students will notice this and model your behaviour. When a student tries to be like you, this is the ultimate in respect.

In most cases, if you publicly acknowledge a student's good behaviour, whether it's in front of the class or at home, the student will have a more positive feeling towards you and towards learning. If you are always correcting a student, either in behaviour or

language skills, they will probably feel anger towards you. Remember there is always something good in everything and it's your job to find it! If you can find a balance of giving negative and positive feedback to your students, they will truly respect you. For every negative piece of feedback, be sure to give a positive comment, too.

Compassion

It can't be stressed enough that respect goes both ways. In Personal Development classes, this is especially true. There might be cultural barriers, a child is up against and you, but you as the teacher, need to be as understanding and compassionate as possible. So do your best to put yourself in your students' shoes and really try to think about how they may be feeling.

4 PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING: WHAT IS THE FOCUS OF MY TEACHING?

Page

4.1 Orientation towards goals

Every topic and every task in the teaching and learning materials include descriptions of the goals that should be attained through task-based learning. When explaining a task and giving instructions to the students it will still be very important to communicate the objectives. Only then will students understand why they are doing what they are doing.

Applying goal orientation theory in the classroom

Students tend to adopt the goal orientation that is stressed in their classrooms. Given that the research clearly shows that the mastery approach of goal orientation is related to better motivational and cognitive outcomes, the following suggestions should help to facilitate the adoption of mastery goals (in light of the debate and unresolved issues regarding the adaptive nature of approach performance goals, we do not offer any strategies to foster performance goals) (taken from Schunk/Pintrich 2010):

1. Focus on all meaningful aspects of learning activities.
2. Design tasks for novelty, variety, diversity, and interest.
3. Design tasks that are challenging but reasonable in terms of students' capabilities.
4. Provide opportunities for students to have some choice and control over the activities in the classroom.
5. Focus on individual improvement, learning, progress, and mastery.
6. Strive to make evaluation private, not public.
7. Recognise the students' efforts.
8. Help students see mistakes as opportunities for learning.
9. Use heterogeneous cooperative groups to foster peer interaction; use individual work to convey progress.
10. Adjust time on task requirements for students having trouble completing work; allow students to plan work schedules and time lines for progress.

Establishing goals, communicating them and celebrating success

Arguably the most basic issue a teacher can consider is what he or she will do to establish and communicate learning goals, track student progress and celebrate success. In effect, this includes three distinct but highly related elements: (1) setting and communicating learning goals, (2) tracking student progress and (3) celebrating success. These elements have a fairly straightforward relationship. Establishing and communicating

learning goals is the starting place. After all, for learning to be effective, clear targets in terms of information and skill must be established. However, establishing and communicating learning goals alone does not suffice for student learning. Rather, once goals have been set, it is natural and necessary to track student progress. This assessment does not occur at the end of a unit only but throughout the unit as it is worked upon. Finally, given that each student has made progress in one or more learning goals, the teacher and students can celebrate those successes.

TASK:

Underline the most important aspects in the text above from your point of view. Draw out the three main messages. Exchange your experience with a colleague and discuss what goal orientation might mean in your classes.

4.2 Orientation towards competences

Teaching and learning in multi-cultural and multi-ethnic classrooms has to be competence based in order to leave a deficit-oriented pedagogy behind. Instructional science has produced various definitions of everything belonging to "competences". The definition most commonly used in German-speaking countries is Franz E. Weinert's: "Competences are the cognitive skills and abilities available to individuals or acquired by them to solve specific problems as well as the motivational, volitional (determined by the will) and social readiness and abilities associated therewith to apply problem-solving successfully and responsibly to variable situations" (Weinert 2001). It is not about factual knowledge but rather about the ability to solve problems and, finally, about the necessary attitudes and motivation. Teaching methodology distinguishes two kinds of competences, namely subject-specific and transferable competences. Subject-specific competences are all the skills closely connected to one particular school subject. Transferable competences are all those skills and abilities necessary to be able to cope in life and not specifically linked to a particular school subject. These could be, for example, personal competences (self-reliance, reflection etc.), social (cooperation skills, conflict resolution skills etc.), but also methodical skills (communication skills, problem-solving skills etc.).

In short, this means:

- The goals to be attained by the students constitute different competence areas or levels. Learning at school is not guided by a specific range of topics (canon) or by specific content goals to be reached anymore, but by a set of competences to be acquired by the students step by step.
- The proficiency and progress of the students are assessed according to their achievement (or "performance" as it is more frequently called) in relation to a specific competence level.

The insistence on competence-oriented teaching goes hand in hand with the request for more learner-centred and needs-oriented education. To sum up, it can be said that competence-oriented teaching is characterised by the following aspects:

- Activating the cognitive abilities of students by using demanding, but well-matched exercises
- Establishing a connection between existing knowledge and skills and newly acquired content
- Intelligent practising
- Looking for appropriate situations to apply knowledge and skills
- Individual support of learning processes
- Students reflect on their own learning progress (metacognition)

Competences and lifelong learning

In academic debate, competence orientation is also frequently connected to the concept of lifelong learning and the acquisition of appropriate life skills at school. This tendency can also be traced in the papers published by the European Commission: "It is where they gain the basic knowledge, skills and competences that they need throughout their lives and the place where many of their fundamental attitudes and values develop." (European Commission 2010). As a result of this, the demand has arisen for teachers to be equipped with the necessary competences to orientate the learning of their students towards a lifelong perspective.

Those competences that are connected to the demands of lifelong learning are to do with areas such as learning motivation, conviction of self-efficacy, teamwork skills, information and research competence, flexibility, communication competence etc. The developed teaching and learning resources lead children and young people to discover and become aware of their own pre-existing competences. Furthermore, the resources aim to further the self-concept and self-confidence of the students, their cooperative work with each other, the development of a healthy culture of learning from mistakes, the intrinsic motivation for self-directed learning, the evaluation competence of their own learning as well as the competence to be able to make decisions and carry the consequences for these decisions. In a more detailed description of furthering self-concept and life skills as well as job-orientation skills, the following competence areas are key:

- analytical competence of own strengths and weaknesses
- methodological competence to access information and to develop learning strategies
- specific job-orientation competences
- conflict resolution competence
- communication competence and cooperation competence
- decision-making competence and taking responsibility

In this sense, *analytical competence* has the objective of dealing with one's own skills and abilities from a competence-oriented (rather than a deficit-oriented) approach, to locate these and to sort them out, to weigh them up and – after having put them to use – to evaluate them. *Methodological competence* then, describes the mastery of a diverse range of methods and techniques that enable self-reflection and the ability to enter into a dialogue with one's counterpart. This includes methods such as writing lists, arguing 'for' and 'against', being able to represent real circumstances (e. g. expressing feelings), conducting interviews, giving and receiving feedback, imagining 'what if' situations, finding alternative solutions to a given problem etc.

This competence area encompasses the entire range of learning strategies in addition to developing and refining particular those learning strategies that are found to be the most effective for a particular individual. The acquired methods ultimately serve to gain a deeper understanding of one's own work habits and thought patterns employed to overcome life's challenges. *Specific job-orientation competences* describe all competences that are related to knowledge connected with the professional world, such as different job opportunities, working conditions, process of applying for a job etc. The area of *conflict competence* has proven to be highly meaningful, particularly if the group of students consists of disadvantaged or stigmatised students. The acquisition of non-violent conflict resolution strategies is indispensable for communal life. With this it is hoped that these children and young people are helped towards gaining a peaceful life. The areas of *communication and cooperation competence* target age-appropriate, respectful communication, expressing opinions, formulating needs, the ability to listen and to respond as well as all forms of cooperation in pairs, but also in small groups. In this way, students should be prepared not only for the challenges of higher and further education, but also for those presented by the world of work. Finally, *Decision-making competence and taking responsibility* describes the competence area in which students are able to make their first decisions regarding their own interests, in which they should be able to take on responsibility for the decisions they have made for themselves and to defend them. This becomes more and more important the nearer students get to the transition point between school and work.

4.3 Orientation towards reality and presence

Any teaching must take students' actual everyday lives and future conditions into account when choosing learning contents. This becomes even more necessary when dealing with children and adolescents coming from poor socio-economic backgrounds or who have a short and unsuccessful school biography. This means that topics must be chosen so as to be up-to-date and relevant to the lives of learners. 50 years ago, Wolfgang Klafki expressed this pointedly in the following question: "How relevant is the content or topic in question in the cognitive development of the children in my class? Or more precisely, what experience, ability or skill are they meant to acquire by its means? How relevant is the content from the pedagogical point of view?" (Klafki, 1958). However,

not only must the relevance of the content be taken into account in terms of the students' present, but also in terms of their future.

The teachers' job is to choose relevant learning contents for the students' present lives and future needs. Offering learning content that is relevant to students' lives demands high professional standards from teachers and up-to-date information on the young learners' everyday lives, problems and pre-conditions. For teachers in multi-cultural and multi-ethnic groups this means first and foremost that they must take into account the fact that their students grow up as children belonging to a minority, in and between two cultures and with experiences which differ significantly from the experiences of other students in their schools. Topics such as "life in the city", "fairy-tales and myths", "in 20 years I will be…", "my dream job" etc. in rural schools in Romania have to be treated differently from the way they would be treated in mainstream schooling in urban surroundings. In the case of minority children who grow up in a bicultural environment, it is imperative to bear in mind not only their background and their additional experiences and competences, but also their possibly weaker command of their heritage language. Few countries have made an effort to adapt their curricula in a way that also addresses topics and themes that are relevant to the lives of children from different ethnic groups: the number of topics which are traditionally taught still prevail.

TASK:

Draw two columns on a sheet of paper. When you think of your students, which topics would be relevant for them in terms of their lives? Write them down in the first column of the table. Now look through the teaching and learning materials. Which topics do you consider most relevant for them? Write them down in the second column.

4.4 Differentiation

What is differentiation?
Differentiated instruction means simply providing instruction in a variety of ways to meet the needs of a variety of learners (adapted from Tomlinson 2001).

1. *A differentiated classroom is proactive.*
   The teacher in a differentiated classroom realises that individual students have different needs. Because of this, the teacher proactively plans a variety of methods to get students to engage in learning. Where a traditional lesson changes reactively when learning is not occurring as planned, a differentiated lesson is proactively planned so that individual needs are addressed before the lesson occurs.

2. *Differentiated instruction is more qualitative than quantitative.*
   Differentiated instruction is not the amount of work given to students but rather putting students in a learning environment in which they can engage in learning. For example, a student who has already mastered a concept in maths should not be given more problems, but should stop practicing that skill and move on to a subsequent skill. In addition, giving a student who is struggling a smaller amount of examples is less effective in helping them to gain mastery. This student may need more assistance, practice or an alternative way to express knowledge.

3. *Differentiated instruction provides multiple approaches to content, process and product.*
   During instruction, teachers are conscious of three elements: content (what students learn), process (how students make sense of content) and product (how students demonstrate what they have learned). When using a differentiated approach in the classroom, teachers can offer different approaches to what students learn, how they learn it and how they demonstrate what they have learnt.

4. *Differentiated instruction is student centred.* A differentiated classroom is one that allows students to think for themselves. The teacher does not tell the students everything but rather allows the student to discover concepts independently while growing at his or her own pace. Lessons are designed to engage growth in all students. Lessons are neither too difficult nor too easy for the individual student, but challenging.

5. *Differentiated instruction is a blend of whole-class, group, and individual instruction.* In a differentiated classroom, students receive whole-class, group and individual instruction. When working together these types of instruction as a whole increase student learning. During whole-class instruction students gain a feeling of community and common understanding. After whole-class instruction, students may move into group or individual instruction and conclude by sharing what they have learnt in a whole-class setting.

Key principles of a differentiated classroom

Differentiation is a teaching concept in which the classroom teacher plans for the diverse needs of students. The teacher must consider differences such as the students':

- learning styles, skill levels, and rates
- language proficiency
- background experiences and knowledge
- motivation
- ability to attend
- social and emotional development
- levels of abstraction
- physical needs

Key principles of a differentiated classroom

1. The teacher is clear about what matters in the content area.
2. The teacher understands, appreciates and builds upon student differences.
3. Assessment and instruction are inseparable.
4. The teacher adjusts content, process, and product in response to student readiness, interests, and learning profiles.
5. All students participate in respectful work.
6. Students and teachers are collaborators in learning.
7. Goals are maximum growth and continued success.
8. Flexibility is the hallmark of a differentiated classroom.

See also figure 7

TASK:

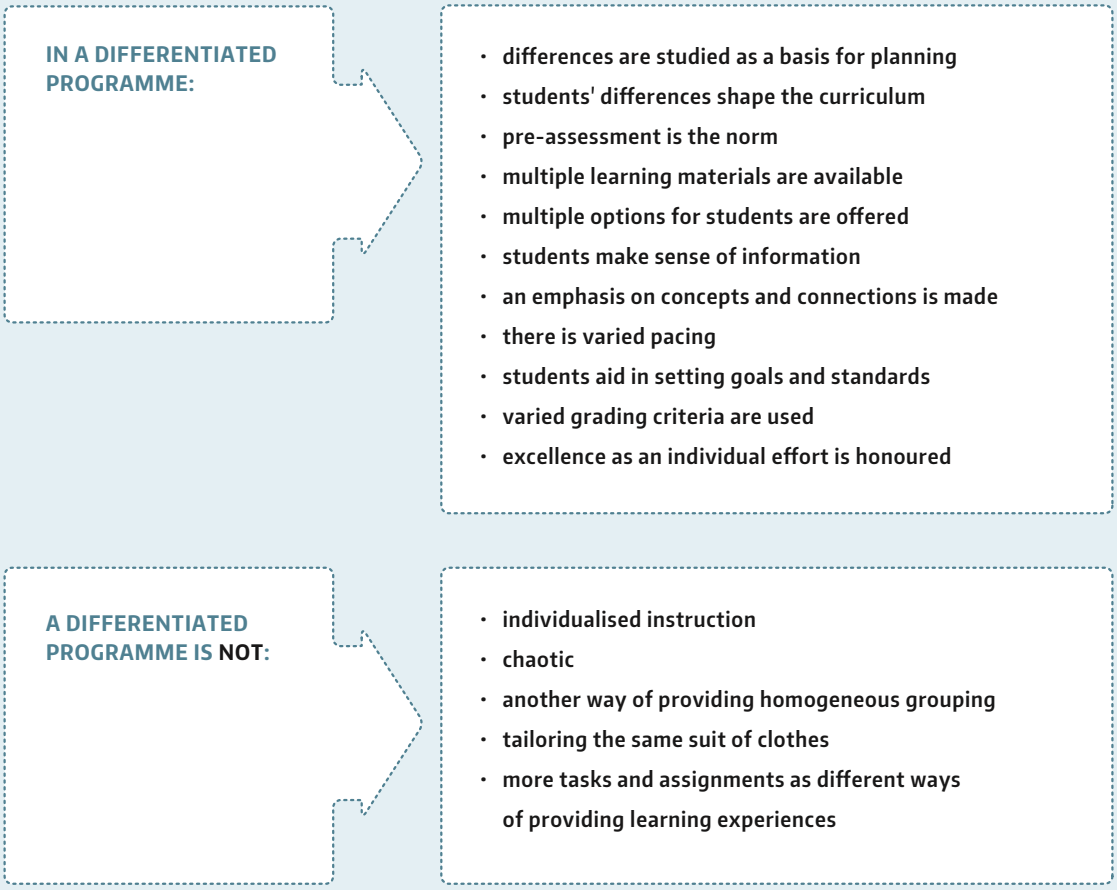
Think of one class that you currently teach. How many different levels of learning are there? Look through the teaching and learning materials. Choose one task that you will adapt to three different learning levels. Discuss your ideas with a colleague.

4.5 Dealing with diversity

Depending on the region, town or area your school is located in the population of students might be very heterogeneous. When tackling the different topics of "PD" and when talking about the different perspectives of the students' individual futures it is important that you bear in mind their different backgrounds. Talking about individual talents, skills and interests will probably turn out differently in a class that consists of many students from low socio-economic backgrounds or ethnic minorities because of their limited experiences due to fewer past possibilities. Having a diverse group of students simply means recognising that all the people are unique in their own way. Their differences could consist of their reading level, athletic ability, cultural background, personality, religious beliefs and so on. There has always been diversity in the classroom, but in today's society it is important to embrace it and make positive use of it. Teachers should value diversity and they need to model this attitude to their students. When people value diversity, they recognise and respect the fact that people are different and that these differences are generally a good thing. For example, when attempting to solve a problem, it is better to assemble a

FIGURE 7

KEY CHARACTERSTICS OF DIFFERENTIATION



diverse team with many skills and many different ways of approaching the problem than it is to assemble a team that has all their strengths concentrated in one area. The following advice for dealing with diversity in the classroom is derived from Taylor (2011):

What can teachers do to encourage, value and promote diversity?

If students' backgrounds are not respected, then their chances of success in that class dramatically decreases. Also, as our society becomes more diverse, it is important that students learn to value and use diversity for the greater good. Teachers already have a number of roles in the classroom, yet valuing diversity is one of the most important ones. Below is a list of just a few things that teachers can do to create an environment where each student feels valued and respected (the following list was taken from NDT-ED (2013)).

- Take the time to learn about your students' background, interests and learning styles. This will allow you to create an environment that is conducive to each individual student.
- Allow time for the students to learn about each other and gain an appreciation for the diversity they bring to the classroom.
- Remind them how boring it would be if we were all alike and there were no differences among us to make each person unique.
- Teach students that everyone has strengths and weaknesses. When working in teams encourage students to take advantage of

the strengths of the team members in order to produce the best possible results.
- Bring in different people to the class as resources that students might be able to connect with.
- Search out people that are different from yourself and that might share certain qualities with your students.
- Students need role models. Many times when they see they are connected in some way to a person they will be more apt to listen and learn from them.
- Never tolerate bullying, teasing and other negative behaviour at any time in the classroom.
- Implement zero tolerance for anything that is disrespectful, hurtful or intolerant of diversity.

It starts with you

Teachers and students need to work together to create a classroom environment that is inclusive within the context of valuing cultural diversity in schools. Students must feel supported and be able to express their views and concerns. This article describes helpful strategies to deal with diversity in the classroom.

Identifying one's own attitudes towards diversity

To deal with diversity in the classroom, teachers must first identify their own attitudes. This begins with increasing awareness of their assumptions about people who are different from them. This will help teachers to be more sensitive and considerate towards students who are different. Moreover, there is the need to broaden horizons. A good start is to get to know the students in the class. The students in any classroom are usually diverse and teachers can learn from them. Additionally, teachers need to build relationships in the classroom: students need to know that teachers care about their welfare despite the existing differences.

Recognise students' diversity

It is important that teachers recognise diversity in the classroom. Indeed, various forms of diversity exist in classrooms including ethnic, gender, cultural diversity, differences in abilities and leaning styles. Of course, teachers serve as role models for students to learn to value diversity among their peers. Teachers need to recognise that students have different learning styles and thus they must use varied methods and activities to ensure all needs are met. Incorporating various teaching techniques in lessons allows teachers to address a wider spectrum of learners.

Promote a respectful learning environment

Promoting a respectful learning environment begins with seeing each student as an individual. Each student is respected for who she or he is. Teachers, therefore, promote communication. They talk to their students respectfully and encourage them to participate in class.

Activities that promote learning for all students

Various strategies may be employed within the classroom to promote learning for diverse groups of students. One such technique is grouping students for learning. This improves the interpersonal relationships among students. Students also learn from each other and this can also be an effective way of teaching diversity. All students should be encouraged to participate in classroom discussions. However, there is a need to respect their differences. For example, some students feel more comfortable listening. Furthermore, guest speakers from particular groups could make presentations to the class. This could broaden and enrich students' learning and foster diversity in class. An environment that is comfortable and non-threatening facilitates diversity in the classroom. This gives students a sense of belonging despite differences and promotes learning.

TASK:

Think about your upcoming teaching sequences. How could you promote diversity in the tasks ahead? Can you think about activities, games etc.? Take notes and exchange your ideas with a colleague.

5 THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Page

5.1 Influencing factors for students' achievement

According to research learning processes and student achievements are influenced by internal as well as external factors. The most notable internal factors are the students' prior knowledge, motivation, intelligence, achievement aspiration and resilience (Hattie 2009).

However, learning from the very beginning onwards is also influenced by various external factors that should not be underestimated. The external environment refers to the surroundings that prevail in home, school and locality. At these places the child interacts with other members of the family, teachers' classmates or peers and neighbours. He establishes relationship with them. Some of the environmental factors are as (taken from Jain 2016):

The influence of surroundings
Chief surroundings are

- *Natural surroundings*
  Natural surroundings cover the climatic and atmospheric conditions. For a limited time, humidity and high temperature can be tolerated but prolonged humidity and high temperature become unbearable. They decrease mental efficiency. Extreme climatic conditions can have an influence on the learning process. Likewise, the morning time is always better for mastering difficult tasks. Studies on the academic progress of evening school students show losses of efficiency varying from one to six per cent.

- *Social surroundings*
  Social surroundings include the home, school and locality. Learning is affected by physical conditions at home such as a large family, small family (specific family of the study) insufficient ventilation, improper lighting, uncomfortable temperatures, a noisy home environment due to use of radio and TV etc.

- *Socio-economic situation*
  The socio-emotional factors such as child-rearing practices, reward and punishment, scope for freedom in activities, decision-making in play, study facilities, (dis)organisation, the quality of relationships among family members or birth order and sibling rivalry all have a great influence on learning.

- *Cultural demands and social expectation*
  These influence learning considerably, as the spirit of culture is reflected in its social and educational institutions. For instance, in an industrialised culture, the emphasis is mostly on mechanical science and preparing children for highly mechanised vocations. Likewise, in an agricultural community, the educational process focuses on preparing its members for those skills most suited to the needs of an agrarian community.

The influence of relationships

- *The setup of learning*
  The teacher is an important constituent in the instructional process. The way he teaches and manages the students has an effect on their learning. An authoritarian teacher may create aggression and hostility among students. By contrast, a democratic teacher is more likely to create a participatory climate for learning. A democratic environment encourages constructive and cooperative behaviour. Generally, students learn better in a democratic setup because they like democratic procedures.

- *Relationship with parents*
  This relationship plays a vital role in the learning process of the student. A child-parent relationship based on mutual trust and respect can greatly facilitate learning. On the other hand, a dysfunctional and unhealthy social environment adversely affects the learning of the student. Upward mobility brings resistance on the part of the student to learn. Student's belonging to such families often find themselves unable to cope.

- *Peer group*
  This relationship also plays a critical role in learning. Student-student relationships in the classroom, school or society create a particular type of emotional climate. The climate is contingent upon the quality of their relationships. A sound relationship provides a tension-free environment that enables the students to learn more effectively in class. Negative relationships among peers adversely affect the quality of learning.

Media Influence on learning

The media is an important component of transmitting information and can be divided into the two broad categories of print and non-print media.

- *Print media:*
  This refers to texts or printed materials. It is economical and has traditionally been used for pedagogical purposes.

- *Non-print media:*
  This is also known as modern electronic media. It has certain unique qualities, which in certain cases facilitates learning much faster than printed media. Certain non-print media formats and delivery systems greatly contribute to students' learning activities. However, the use of social media like facebook, twitter, snapchat or any other social media exchange platforms has to be discussed with students and their inherent dangers have to be highlighted. When used and applied in a constructive way in classroom settings, non-print media like the internet can
  - Arouse motivation
  - Help students become actively involved in the learning process
  - Increase students' concentration.

TASK:

Recall the students you teach currently (choose one class or group) and choose 3 students for closer analysis. Think about the environmental factors that might influence their learning. Write them down briefly and exchange your insights with another colleague. Do you always think about these factors when grading? Do they influence their performance in "PD" from your point of view? Discuss this with your colleague.

5.2 Involving parents

"It takes a village to raise a child" is a popular quote. It emphasises the importance of the community for the development of children and adolescents. In the past, parent involvement was characterised by volunteers, mostly mothers, assisting in the classroom (van Roekel 2008). Nowadays school has adopted a more inclusive approach, by inviting parents to form school-family-community partnerships and engage in participatory activity within the school etc.

There is clear research evidence that shows that parental involvement in school and in the learning processes of children and adolescents correlates with higher academic performance and school improvement (*ibid.*). When schools, parents, families and communities work together to support learning, students tend to earn higher grades, attend school more regularly, stay in school longer etc. It is also the key to fight school dropout rates (*ibid.*). Research shows that the family is still the most important place for early childhood education. The parents have a key function for how children start to learn. Support from parents is linked to successful development and learning in children. Therefore it is central to have parents as co-educational partners. The challenge is how to reach them, starting at kindergarten level.

Parents should be welcomed and informed by the school about the importance of mutual trust and common educational work. Trust can only grow if there are regular meetings with positive experiences. Parents should feel welcomed at school and realise their importance. Parents should know that they can engage in regular exchange with the teacher about their child. Parents feel included when teachers show interest in their child and in their opinions. However, parents also have to be informed about their tasks and duties and about when and how they can take part in parents' talks and events. They should be informed about the ways in which they can best support their child.

What kind of framework should a school provide in order to involve parents?
Epstein distinguishes six different forms of parental involvement and the encouragement thereof:
(Epstein 1992)

1. *Parenting:* Assist families with parenting skills, family support, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions to support learning at each age and grade level. Assist schools in understanding families' backgrounds, cultures and goals for children.
2. *Communicating:* Communicate with families about school programmes such as "PD" and report on student progress in these programmes as well as overall. Create two-way communication channels between school and home that are effective and reliable.
3. *Volunteering:* Improve recruitment and training to involve families as volunteers and as audiences at the school or in other locations. Enable educators to work with volunteers who support students and the school. Provide meaningful work and flexible scheduling.
4. *Learning at home:* Involve families as participants in school decisions, governance and advocacy activities through school councils or improvement teams, committees and other organisations.
5. *Collaborating with the community:* Coordinate resources and services for families, students and the school with community groups, including businesses (like in the "PD" programme), agencies, cultural and civic organisations and colleges or universities.

When a school adopts a framework like this as a policy for school-parent cooperation, programmes like Personal Development can stand on a more solid ground. If this is not the case, teachers must work hard to develop the parent-school relationship through programmes like "PD". Naturally, programmes like this strengthen these relationships and make parents put more trust in the school. "PD" focuses on and promotes the competences of children and adolescents and values and builds upon those competences that learners have acquired in a family or home context.

Cooperation between school and parents normally improves. Blickenstorfer distinguishes 5 phases of good cooperation between school and parents:

1. To get to know each other and develop mutual trust
2. To keep in touch and deepen the contact

3. To inform each other
4. Encouraging parents to support the learning process of their children (homework support)
5. Inviting parents to participate in everyday school life

Hindering factors for parental involvement

Sometimes parents hesitate to become involved in school activities. Some point to their own demanding schedules and say they don't have extra time to volunteer or even attend school activities, much less get involved in bigger ways. Others reveal how uncomfortable they feel when trying to communicate with teachers or school officials. This might be due to cultural or language differences. Negative school experiences could also be the underlying reasons for a lack of involvement. Some parents also feel that they lack the know-how and resources to help their child. This is especially true for illiterate parents or parents who have recently migrated from or fled their country of origin. It is the teacher's task to contact these parents and to maintain contact and seek out possibilities for involving them in school life. It is very important to get underprivileged families into school and classrooms by valuing their competences or by using their skills for different activities (handicrafts, music etc.). These activities could be:

- Setting tasks to complete at home (not homework, but e. g. asking parents about their skills, interviewing them, taking a photo etc.).
- Inviting parents to celebrations as audiences
- Inviting parents to come to classrooms and help.

TASK:

Think about the situations in which you experience the parent-teacher relationship in a positive way. Recall the factors that made it successful. Write them down on a sheet of paper and exchange your ideas with another colleague.

5.3 Giving feedback to parents

"Your son is doing well. He is doing ok in his academic subjects … just keep it up."
"She understands the lesson."
"She is friendly towards her classmates."

Vague comments such as these are risky and too open for errant interpretations (e. g. how ok is "ok"?) To the parent, it can mean that the student is performing perfectly, thus any sudden dip in future test scores can cause stress and worry. It may also seem that the teacher is not keeping an eye on the students. Further, it is unrealistic and does not help solve any problems in academic performance. Teachers cannot and should not avoid chance meetings with parents, when parents will most likely ask for instant feedback. Though unavoidable, teachers can do several things to prepare themselves in order to provide authentic feedback. The following list might be helpful (The Online Chronicle 2012):

1. *Collect brief anecdotes regularly.* If you have a large class, you must have a huge collection of anecdotes. A set of criteria for collecting observations is crucial. Focus on very significant incidents: the student wasn't able to finish a classroom task or assignment, he or she came to school without homework, repeatedly failed quizzes, etc.
2. *Confer with other subject teachers* regarding their feedback, especially if you are the class adviser. To accomplish this in less than an hour, focus your meeting on observed performance and recommended solutions.
3. *Develop a feedback system for parents.* If your school doesn't have a feedback system for parents, organise one with your principal and co-teachers. Determine a suitable schedule so as not to compromise your teaching tasks and preparation, while keeping in mind that not all parents can be available at any given time. When ready, explain the feedback system to the parents, since they are part of the school community.
4. *Give feedback* when necessary, even when not on schedule. Incidents such as consecutive quizzes where the student barely achieved a pass merit a phone call to the parent. Think of

it as a preventative move on your part that may help avoid serious academic problems. Any parent will surely appreciate your concern and promptness.

5. *Organise your anecdotes.* This will help you deliver concrete reports and recommendations. List the items in order of priority. Some things may be not worth mentioning at all.
6. *Listen to parents* and take notes during or after the feedback meeting. Parents may mention incidents outside school that may be significant to a student's class performance. Since parents have known your student longer than you have, they may provide insight on how to best motivate their child.
7. *Parents are your collaborators.* With their input and insight, your ultimate goal is to come up with solutions that will best help improve a student's academic performance and offer opportunities for personal growth.

These simple steps will help the teacher do away with vague reports to parents which sometimes serve only as false hope. Our clients deserve the best service we can give in terms of being accurate and timely. Teachers who communicate student performance effectively are able to provide help readily by alerting parents. Well-informed parents are then able to take the best corrective action at their end. Such action should run parallel to whatever intervention the teacher makes in the classroom. Thus there is a need for teachers to be more articulate and specific in giving feedback.

Just like any new policy or change in policy, this will work best if formulated as a community. Teachers, the school administration and parents should and must all contribute to creating and implementing an effective feedback system.

TASK:

Recall a positive and a negative situation where you gave feedback to parents. Do you agree with the hints in the text? What are your personal strategies for giving feedback to parents? Take notes and share your ideas with your colleagues.

5.4 Co-operating with businesses

In Personal Development, job orientation is a big part in upper primary or secondary school classes. When choosing a career, it is important for young people to take into account their interests and desires as well as the jobs that are on offer to them in their locality at that time. Young people should be aware of the actual employment options available to them and of the qualifications that are required of them. Career orientation comprises a collaborative effort between state, region, community, parents and schools. Schools can make a valuable contribution to this collaboration by building up and maintaining strong connections to local businesses and employers.

Together with school principals and their wider communities, teachers themselves can take action by initiating various activities:

1. *Informing and exploring:* Teachers can see for themselves what it's like to find out more about local economic, labour market and employment opportunities through analysing official statistical indicators and other data sources and by contacting local employers, thereby discovering the local labour market from a different angle. They can visit various businesses or small-scale enterprises to gather information. Before doing this, they should think about the questions they would like to ask the employer and should take notes during the meeting so that they can put together an informative network list later on. Furthermore, the school principal or leadership team, together with the school inspector and/or the local mayor can compile a letter to local businesses or the board of commerce that describes the "PD" programme and explains why a well-guided career orientation process is so important.

2. *Also invite the businesses or experts to school:* The efforts of businesses to allow young people professional insight into their work processes should not be underestimated. This effort should be recognized and honoured and the respective businesses should be invited to the Personal Development/Job

orientation class or to other school events. Having a single person acting as the main contact at a school celebration is still best way to achieve a successful and stable network of local employers.

3. *Organize a market place:* Together with parent volunteers and representatives of the private sector, schools should organize a market place where students can participate in workshops. The workshops should cover topics such as "how to conduct a telephone conversation", "how to conduct an interview", "practising an interview" etc. This is a great opportunity for two to three businesses to present themselves and answer the student's questions.

4. *Let's initiate a project:* Schools, together with the municipality and the private sector, can initiate a project that could possibly be supervised by a volunteer project coordinator. Students from the 7th to the 9th class could work in local businesses on an hourly basis, where they could complete easier tasks that would already allow them to gain some brief work experience. This would not only be of benefit to the young people, but also the local businesses. Here too, teachers can support this process by networking and talking to local employees to inform them about the "PD" programme.

5. *Coaching and mentoring:* Now and again students need individual help during the process of career orientation, because it isn't always easy for them to present their abilities or because they have learning difficulties that hinder their academic success. If this is the case, a volunteer who is already integrated in the world of work could support them. In as little as a couple of hours, this coach can already help to optimize the application documents and provide great assistance in preparing for interview. He or she can engage in an on going dialogue with the student to support them in their process of choosing a suitable career and to keep them motivated in particular. It is very important to focus on the strengths and to highlight the successes of each student.

In all countries, cooperation between the state education institutions and the private sector is one of the greatest challenges, because not all companies are interested in training young people or they do not fulfil the necessary requirement to do so. Yet in the long term, it is in the interest of local businesses to offer young people internships and attractive career prospects. Only then can the job market ensure a new generation of motivated employees and take responsibility for a well-qualified workforce.

TASK:

Contact the parents of your students and ask them whether one of them would be prepared to present their own job.
The next time you go shopping, visit the car mechanic, the baker, or the doctor, you could tell them about the "PD" programme. Building up a network takes time and starts with small steps.

6 TRAINING TEACHERS: ORGANIZATION, COACHING AND ROLES

Page

6.1 Roles as a (peer) coach and multiplier

Depending on your system, your role might be

- a trainer
- a trainer and coach = multiplier
- a peer coach (on eye-level)

As a trainer you will be in charge of organizing workshops, conveying information and setting activities for your participants.

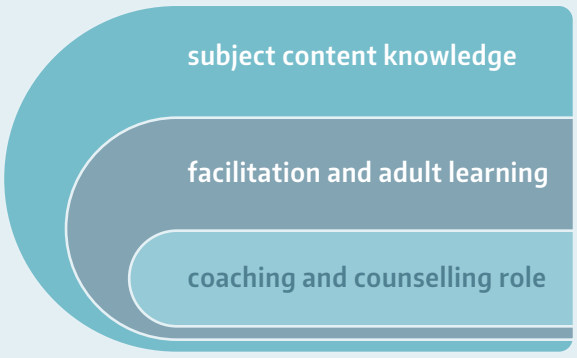
As a multiplier you will be in charge of also observing the process of professional development of the practitioners (e.g. by backstopping visits in classes etc.)

As a peer coach you work on eye-level with the practitioners, not having the task of formal assessment.

In all three cases you will need competences on three different levels. See also figure 8

FIGURE 8

COMPETENCIES OF A COACH



Detailed description of the roles

Subject content knowledge

- is proficient in the language of instruction and has basic knowledge of the language spoken by the majority of teachers and students.
- Demonstrates understanding of the foundational concepts of personal development/ life skills/job orientation and other school subjects.
- Demonstrates an understanding of strategies to support physical, social and emotional safety and well-being of children.
- Demonstrates knowledge of the national curriculum and can effectively guide and model lesson planning in line with the curricular objectives, approaches, scope and sequence.
- Communicates and models varied age-appropriate techniques for instruction (e. g. pair, group, whole-class work, games etc.) in his/ her trainings.

Facilitation and adult learning:

- Demonstrates an understanding of methods and approaches suitable for adult learning
- Actively listens and asks questions to promote teachers' reflective practices.
- Supports teachers to self-assess their teaching ability, needs and challenges.
- Promotes professional development by supporting teachers' strengths and areas of growth.
- Collaborates with teachers to establish short and long-term professional development goals as well as criteria to measure progress.
- Facilitates opportunities for teacher collaboration, peer observation and professional discussions.
- Provides support in multiple settings based upon teachers' needs and preferences, such as one-on-one meetings and small group sessions.
- Uses a variety of strategies such as co-planning, classroom visitations, classroom observations and modelling to encourage teacher adoption of the presented programs and continued development of teacher competencies.
- Monitors and adjusts strategies to support teachers in reaching their goals according to each teacher's progress.
- Recognizes the importance of and facilitates reflection, self-evaluation and problem-solving.
- Provides constructive, competency-based feedback to support teachers in their efforts to improve teaching practice.
- Supports teachers in analysis and response to trends and patterns in students' learning outcomes.

Coaching and counselling role:

- promotes a safe, effective learning environment for all students and teachers.
- encourages self-confidence and the development of all teachers regardless of ability, gender, language, culture or religion.
- Models collegial relations with teaches, collaboration with school leaders and communicates with all education stakeholders in a professional manner.
- Models reflective, responsive, inclusive and participatory practices during peer coaching activities.
- Maintains and adheres to a coaching calendar and maintains a system of record keeping to account for group and one-on-one (classroom observations) activities.
- Recognizes barriers to the successful implementation of peer coaching activities (e. g. time, distance, trust etc.) and seeks solutions to overcoming those barriers.
- Collaborates with teachers to develop relevant, competency-based, measurable goals.

TASK:

Recall all the elements of the learning program you will teach as a trainer or coach. Think about the subject content knowledge you have to convey. Think about your competences as a trainer for adults. Also, think about what you have to know as a coach. Make three lists and gather your thoughts.

Then, reflect on these questions:

- *What do you think?*
- *With which role do you feel most comfortable with?*
- *Which roles are the most challenging for you?*
- *Think about how you could reach these goals.*

FIGURE 9

POSSIBLE SEQUENCE OF A PEER COACHING PROCESS

6.2 Organization

One of the ways to improve teaching quality can be the element of continuous coaching. The below model illustrates how this could work (INEE 2019). After a training workshop done by the trainer (e.g. on personal development, life skills etc.) the participants (practitioners) go back into their teaching environment and practice the new skills. The trainer arranges and organizes classroom visitations with individual teachers. In these classroom visitations (= backstopping) the trainer agrees on elements to be observed by the him/her with the practitioner. After the visitation the trainer gives feedback to the practitioner and sets goals that they both agree on. Teacher Learning Circles that consist of more colleagues within one school can also serve as a peer-coaching or peer-exchange elements. These circles are self-guided and practitioners bring in their experiences, talk about successes and discuss challenges (*ibid*.). See also figure 9

In concrete terms, this means:

- Conducting a workshop with colleagues
- Preparing coaching sessions and setting goals
- Preparing class observations
- Giving feedback

TASK:

Think about how you would plan your role as a trainer/coach/peer coach. Draw a timeline and take notes about how you would organize this.

Exchange your ideas with a partner. After 20' the two of you find another pair and discuss your ideas. Maybe you will get inspired by your colleagues.

6.3 Feedback

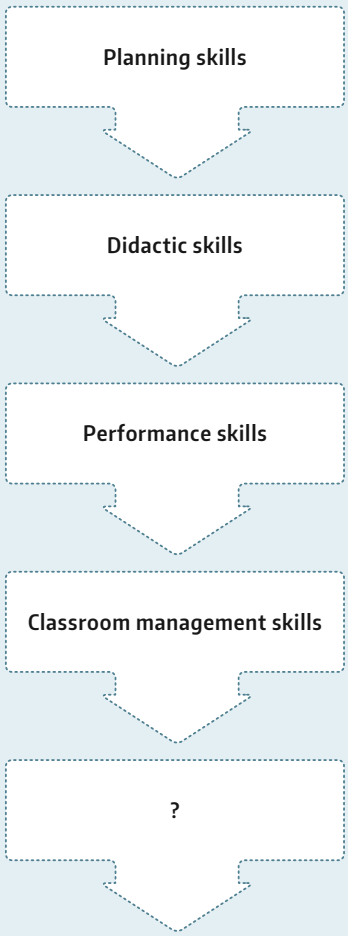
When coaching practitioners you will have to give feedback on criteria you agreed to observe. This feedback – when constructive – helps professionals to improve their teaching. For using feedback a structure can help you as a trainer/coach. The set goals is in the centre of the feedback (which was agreed prior to the classroom visit).

How do I set goals with practitioners / my colleagues?

Together with your colleague, you decide which goals he/she wants to set for him/herself:

FIGURE 10

SETTING A FOCUS IN DIFFERENT SKILLS



Additional hints for setting goals can be:

- Every goal should be a SMART goal (specific/ simple, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound)
- You set goals together with your colleague in a coaching meeting.
- For setting the goals you have to understand his/her situation.

A structure for giving feedback

INTRODUCTION:
Personal form of address; what the feedback is about
DESCRIPTION:
Describing what is here; focussing on the main points
EVALUATION, ASSESSMENT:
Appreciating what is good; mentioning strong (more) and weak (less) points
HOW TO IMPROVE:
Formative: Tips how to improve (few but concrete); open questions
CLOSING UP:
Summative: conclusion; result in form of a mark/grade

(Martin Keller / Hannes Schaad)

TASK:

a. *Can you find examples/sentences for each element mentioned above? Take notes and exchange them with others.*

b. *Draw your own model of feedback: How big is each element? Not every element takes up 20 % of space!*

7 LITERATURE

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